

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 SAJ-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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R 070812Z JAN 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8632

USLO PEKING

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

FBIS OKINAWA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBASCT: STRAWS IN THE WIND

1. WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE RECENT PAUCITY OF HARD NEWS AND THE UNUSUALLY BRIEF CONTENT IN THE NCNA ENGLISH OVER THE LAST 8 TO 10 DAYS. THE ONLY EXCEPTIONS TO RATHER INCONSEQUENTIAL NEWS STORIES HAVE BEEN THE JANUARY 1 JOINT EDITORIAL AND THE REGIME'S INSISTENT ATTACK ON THE SOVIET UNION FOLLOWING THE HELICOPTER CREW RELEASE. IN ADDITION, THE RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF POLITBURO-RANK LEADERSHIP APPEARANCES DURING THE PERIOD SUGGESTS TO US THAT SOME MEETINGS MAY BE TAKING PLACE. WE NOTE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT PROVINCIAL POLITBURO MEMBERS LI TEH-SHENG, WEI KUO-CHING, AND HSU AHIH-YU ALL FAILED TO BE IDENTIFIED TURNING OUT FOR TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR'S EVE FESTIVITIES. BY CONTRAST, HOWEVER, SEVERAL OF THE PARTY FIRST SECRETARIES IN THE PROVINCES DO SEEM TO BE AT HOME AND ACTIVE IN PRE- AND POST-NEW YEAR'S MEETINGS.

2. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE ABSENCES COULD BE EXPLAINED BY THE RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF RANKING VISITORS IN PEKING

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RECENTLY, WE ARE AWARE THAT THE MARKED UPSWING IN ATTENTION

TO IDEOLOGICAL MATTERS--ASSOCIATED WITH THE EDITORIAL AND
WITH THE END-OF-1975 CALL TO REAFFIRM THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF
THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION--MAY HAVE NECESSITATED MEETINGS.
IN ADDITION, EARLIER PREDICTIONS ON POSSIBLE CONVENING OF A
NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS STANDING COMMITTEE SESSION AND
ANOTHER PARTY PLENUM TO DISCUSS AND AFFIRM THE FIFTH FIVE-
YEAR PLAN AND THE PRESUMED VACANCY-FILLING IN PARTY AND
STATE SLOTS WOULD ALSO NECESSITATE POLITBURO CONSENSUS
BEFOREHAND.
CROSS

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